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Produced by LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

Guest: DR. CHEDDI JAGAN
Prime Minister of British Guiana

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TED POSTON, *The New York Post*
TAD SZULC, *The New York Times*
LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK, *Permanent Panel Member*

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MEET THE PRESS

MR. BROOKS: This is Ned Brooks inviting you to MEET THE PRESS.

Our guest today is Dr. Cheddi Jagan, the newly elected and first Prime Minister of British Guiana, gateway to South America. During his fight for power he became one of the hemisphere's most controversial figures. His recent election created international interest, and it became the subject of heated discussion in the United States Senate.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Prime Minister, in a speech he made in the U. S. Senate following your election, Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, said this about your election:

"What it means is that international Communism has succeeded in establishing its first beachhead on the South American continent."

Since you are here for economic aid, it seems to me you would want to answer that question. Are you or are you not pro-Communist?

DR. JAGAN: Well, Mr. Spivak, let me put it this way: There is a great deal of confusion about this whole question of British Guiana. For instance, the impression over here is that we are moving off from a more or less democratic set up in British Guiana into a dictatorial or Communist set up.

I want to say that in British Guiana thus far we have had

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anything but a democratic set up. What I am interested in is to set up a democratic regime in British Guiana. I have said so on several occasions. My party has taken the lead in seeing to it that democratic rights—bill of rights—are written into our constitution. So that to put my position very clearly, I would say that I believe, like most Americans, in the parliamentary system of democracy. We have enshrined in our constitution a bill of rights which we expect to honor. All rights, four freedoms are preserved in this. Even property rights are preserved in this. On the question of Communism as such there is, as you know, a great deal of confusion as to definitions and so forth. All I can say is that, so far as I am concerned, the personal liberties of the Guianese people and democratic processes will not be sacrificed. I am a Socialist. I believe in a planned economy, but I can assure you this will not take precedence over the liberties of my people.

MR. SPIVAK: Do I understand then by what you are saying that you are neither a Communist, nor pro-Communist, as we understand both words today in relationship to the Soviet Union, in relationship to Communist China? Is that correct?

DR. JAGAN: I told you what my beliefs are. I believe in the parliamentary system of democracy and the methods which are adopted in democratic countries.

MR. SPIVAK: You say you are a Socialist, and you have stated on a number of occasions that you are a Marxist. Will you tell us in what fundamental way, for example, your Marxism differs from the Marxism of Communism?

DR. JAGAN: I have been a student of people like Professor Laski. I have been greatly influenced by his writings, and in this sense I have said on several occasions that I believe in Marxism. I am a Socialist in the sense that I believe that the means of production should be in the hands of the State—public ownership of the means of production, exchange and distribution, which will result in greater distribution of wealth in favor of the poor and also will mean the participation of the people themselves in the whole process of government—in the administration, in factories, in other levels of government.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Prime Minister, you seem to be avoiding a direct answer on some of these questions. The Communists of the Soviet Union insist they are democrats also, that theirs is a real democracy. What we would like to get, and what is important, I think, for the people in this country to know, is where you stand on some of these issues, because you have been quoted as saying in some of your speeches in the past, for example, "My idea was to show the members of this Council that in theory Socialism and Communism are the same." That is why I ask you, where do you stand on this fundamental division in the world today between Communism and western democracy?

DR. JAGAN: Let me put it this way. There is in my view a difference between politics and economics. In the political field my objective obviously is national independence for my country. In the political field, I am wedded, dedicated to parliamentary democracy. In the economic field I do not believe in capitalism. I do not believe that free enterprise, which may have been very wonderful for, say, the United States of America, will in present day circumstances develop either my country or an underdeveloped country in the world generally.

I feel that in countries such as this in the economic realm there must be perforce a great deal of planning, the government taking a bolder hold of the economy of the country so that they can move forward.

On the question of the Soviet bloc as such, there is a planned economy. In this sense I am interested in what is happening there as I am interested in what is happening everywhere. Even in this country economists now are concerned about this question of rate of growth, as you know.

MR. SPIVAK: Do you believe there is freedom in the Soviet Union and in Communist China, which is the big issue? Do you believe there is freedom there, and do you say that you will have in your country essentially the same kind of freedom?

DR. JAGAN: All I can say—I haven't been to China, I haven't been to Russia, but the experts who have been there who have said—for instance, you have this chap who is a writer on this question, an expert, apparently, who writes for the London Observer—I can't recall his name right now, but he has said in his latest book that life in the Soviet Union is growing day by day better and better. The standards of living are improving, and as such, we are concerned. We want to know how this is done.

MR. SPIVAK: I am talking about freedom, Mr. Prime Minister. Do you believe that there is freedom of speech in the Soviet Union? Freedom of worship in the Soviet Union and freedom as we understand it in the Western democracies? Do you believe that?

DR. JAGAN: Freedom of worship, as I am told, there is. In fact, I saw a picture when Nehru visited the Soviet Union which showed him visiting some of the outer regions——

MR. SPIVAK: You believe there is freedom of the press and freedom of speech?

DR. JAGAN: I can't say fully that there is freedom in the way we understand it in the West.

MR. SZULC: Mr. Prime Minister, now that British Guiana is approaching the point of independence, how do you visualize the development of British Guiana socially and economically? How do you plan to guide the development of your country in terms of general development—how do you visualize its relationship to

the inter-American system, to the United States, and how in your view may the Cuban phenomenon—the presence of the Cuban revolution so close to your shores—may or may not affect the economic and political development of British Guiana?

DR. JAGAN: You have asked me quite a mouthful there. However, I can say that my country is kept backward today because it has been dominated by colonialism, not only politically but also economically. Independence will give us the right to fashion our economy in the way I feel it should be done so that the standard of living of the people can be raised. This means going in for a balanced industrial and agricultural development. At the moment our economy rests on two products, sugar and bauxite. Eighty percent of the exports of our country come from these two products.

We obviously, for sound, theoretical and practical reasons must go in for industrialization, and I want to have a fully-blown development program which will be carefully balanced in terms of what will go towards agriculture, what will go towards industry and communications and social development, so that in due course we will be able to generate our own wealth for our own future development. The present method of development in British Guiana I cannot see will get us out of the rut of poverty and insecurity.

As regards the future relationship with Latin America, I can say that I feel we will take our place in the hemisphere, coordinating our activities with what is taking place in Latin America and North America. I have already seen to it that our country is associated with the Economic Commission for Latin America. I attended the last conference in Chile, earlier this year. As regards future relationships, particularly keeping in mind what is happening in Cuba, I feel that all of us must keep in mind what is taking place in all countries. My feeling is that we have to learn from what is taking place in every part of the world, take the best of what is going and adopt it to suit our peculiarities and particular circumstances.

MR. SZULC: When British Guiana does gain independence, is it your plan to take her out of the British Commonwealth, make here into a republic or maintain the ties with the Commonwealth?

DR. JAGAN: No, we have always said that we propose to have independence, political independence within the British Commonwealth of Nations, or the Commonwealth of Nations as it is now called. Even if we become a republic as India is, we will still be a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

MR. POSTON: Mr. Prime Minister, The New York Times quoted you as saying in a lecture you gave here Friday, "Political independence is a worthless thing, a mirage, if it is not accom-

panied by economic independence." You have said that you are going to ask for independence as soon as possible—political independence from England.

Is the economic position of Guiana such that political independence there wouldn't be a mirage at this time?

DR. JAGAN: Yes, I would say that because, as I said before, 80 percent of our economy is represented by two products and both of these industries are in foreign hands, which means a great outflow of capital every year. Taken over a long-term period there may be a greater net outflow of capital compared with what is coming in.

This is a picture, generally, of most under-developed countries, if you take South America, if you take Asia or Africa. In Latin America, for instance, in the ten-year period, the decade 1945 to 1954, there is a net outgo of capital amounting to $3½ billion. In one year, 1954, Latin America was borrowing approximately a little over $500 million and was paying out precisely the same amount in interest and capital on loans which were made previously. If this sort of thing goes on you will not have development, and this is what I am concerned about. In other words, if we have money, if we have help and assistance from outside, we must be free to put it, after we have been scientifically advised how to spend it, on the sectors which will generate wealth more rapidly, so that we don't have, all the time, to go and borrow money from the outside.

MR. POSTON: You have indicated that you want some financial help from American and Canadian sources. Do you still want that?

DR. JAGAN: Certainly.

MR. POSTON: What kind of help would you like, and why do you think that they should invest in Guiana?

DR. JAGAN: I would liike the United States and Canada, indeed every government which is in a position to help, to help us to put our economy in a sound position—not because they owe us anything, but because the gap in living standards today between rich and poor countries is getting wider, and this is resulting in unrest, social unrest on an international scale. This is resulting in revolutions and upheavals and unrest and all the associated things which go with that—with the result, I think that it is in the interest of developed countries like the United States of America, England and so on, to help people like us. Not only from the point of view that it is good for us—it is also good for the developed countries because the more we develop, the more will be the demands for manufactured goods, plants and equipment and so on.

MR. PERKINS: Dr. Jagan, I would like to pick up two state-

ments you have made in the past and ask you about your current feelings on them. First, in a victory speech in Georgetown after your election August 31, you said that the only struggle which should remain in your country is the struggle between the exploiters and the exploited. You also in the past have suggested you might be willing or eager to nationalize industry in British Guiana. How do you feel on those now?

DR. JAGAN: There are a few industries owned, as I said before, by private enterprise. The major industries are owned by private enterprise. We have already taken over one industry. That is the electricity undertaking. This was done on the basis of agreement, discussions with the owners. We have paid compensation for this. We have said also that in terms of British Guiana's position today, which needs vast sums of money, and with the great effort to develop, our hands will be full for some time to come with this new sector of development, and therefore we are not concerned about the nationalization of sugar and bauxite. But as a sovereign country when we become independent, like India and other countries, we reserve the right to nationalize, and will pay adequate and fair compensation should we exercise our sovereign right to nationalize. This is our point of view. In other words, for the time being we don't see the necessity to nationalize. British Guiana is an under-developed country. While sugar and bauxite play the major role, indeed dominate the economy, in the future when British Guiana is developed, this will be a tiny, insignificant sector, in my point of view.

MR. PERKINS: Now Bookers Ltd., a British company, owns 80 percent of the sugar which is your main product and, indeed, Booker's owns a lot in your country. In fact, it has been suggested that perhaps your country should be called Booker's Guiana.

DR. JAGAN: Right.

MR. PERKINS: If the time comes that you decide to nationalize Booker's, the sugar industry, do you think you can keep in business? Booker's claims it wouldn't be in business at all in sugar if the British Government weren't subsidizing the price of sugar. If the British decided not to subsidize it, what would you do?

DR. JAGAN: If we are a member of the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth doesn't disintegrate, if Britain doesn't scuttle it in the meantime, by joining the Common Market, then I see no reason why the same condition shouldn't apply, whether Booker's owns it or whether it is owned by the government of British Guiana.

MR. PERKINS: You think the Commonwealth would be scuttled if Britain joined the Common Market?

DR. JAGAN: This is my feeling, yes.

MR. SPIVAK: I don't mean to hold you to something you said in 1953, but I would like to check whether you still believe that: In a speech you made before the Legislative Council on February 27, 1953, you were quoted as saying this: "Those who know anything about economic theory know that Communism according to the definition of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is only the advanced stage of socialism. My idea was to show the members of the Council that in theory socialism and communism are the same." Do you still believe that?

DR. JAGAN: If I may elaborate that a little, I would like to say from what I have read from the text books, socialism means, or the slogan under socialism is, from each according to his ability, to each according to his labor, the work that he gives. Under communism as under the early Christian setup, all persons were supposed to share equally, and so I see the Communists say in that period to come there will be distribution according to needs. Each one will contribute according to his ability, and from my point of view this is good. This is a good thing that all persons should get from society what they need, regardless of whether he is a cripple or whether he is able to produce more or less.

This I believe you will believe in too, because I am sure you don't agree that some people should own vast sums of money and other should be wallowing in poverty. You have in many countries today the terrible distribution of wealth. Even in my country if you will study the statistics you will find—in most capitalist countries you will find the same thing:—very unequal distribution of wealth. You have conspicuous consumption of those who are wealthy with the result they dissipate the surplus of the country, and nothing is there for development.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Prime Minister, do you believe in the Communist countries today, in the Soviet Union, there is equal distribution of wealth—that Mr. Khrushchev, for example, lives exactly the same as the poorest peasant? Do you think there is equality of distribution?

DR. JAGAN: No, they feel the system of capitalism is an evil —this is what they say. Capitalism, of course, doesn't necessarily mean—or rather, a man earning more than another doesn't necessarily mean he is a capitalist. You have a worker working in a state factory—in my electric enterprise which is nationalized, you have some workers earning more than others, but this doesn't mean they become capitalists.

MR. SPIVAK: I believe a few minutes ago you said you have a constitution and that your constitution provides liberty and freedom and protects the people. I presume you intend to live up to your constitution?

DR. JAGAN: Of course.

MR. SPIVAK: In your recent official biography it states you are in favor of "the fundamental rights of citizens, including right to private property along the lines established in the Federal Constitution of the U. S. A." And yet, if I remember, a few minutes ago you said you planned to nationalize the sugar industry and probably the lumber industry and——

DR. JAGAN: Let me correct you. I said we do not have plans to nationalize—we do not intend to nationalize the sugar and the bauxite, the major industries, but I say as a sovereign country we reserve the right if we want to do so, to nationalize. This is a right every country has.

MR. SPIVAK: But in the book you wrote in '54 you definitely said you would nationalize.

DR. JAGAN: At the present time, having looked at the situation very comprehensively, I don't see the necessity right now. As I said, our hands will be full with the further development of British Guiana.

MR. SZULC: Dr. Jagan, in terms of the future development of British Guiana, do you feel that British Guiana should confine herself to incorporating and receiving aid from the inter-American system, participating in the Alliance for Progress, or do you feel that she should as well go and look for assistance and trade in the rest of the world, specifically in the Soviet Union and in the Soviet bloc? Do you see the Soviet bloc as a potential customer for your sugar?

DR. JAGAN: I am sure the Soviet Union has its hands full with Cuban sugar at the moment, but as regards Inter-American bloc and the Alliance for Progress, I have already said that we are prepared to join the OAS. In fact, I have made approaches, and they have told me, "You can't join. You are not independent. Come back when you are free."

As regards the Alliance for Progress, I agree with President Kennedy's tenets that aid should be given to all these countries once they are prepared to go in for a program of social and economic reform. This is what I am prepared to do. In British Guiana you are all invited to come, and some of you have come. You will know we have a democratic regime free from corruption, free from nepotism, and we intend to go in for a full-blooded program of social economic reform.

MR. POSTON: Dr. Jagan, to get to politics for a moment, Sydney King who is head of the African Society for Racial Equality in Guiana has charged in letters to the UN and to the U. S. that your election was really a numerical triumph of Indians over Negroes in your country. Is there any truth to that? Was the election settled on strictly racial lines?

DR. JAGAN: This is not true because while obviously there is

some bit of racialism in the country, the fact is that the crucial point of the election was to be decided on three constituencies which were marginal, and in those constituencies there was definitely a non-Indian majority. In other words—they claim that I only fight for Indians and that I only get the support of Indians. This is not true. My support comes from the working class of people, predominantly Indians and Africans, and in these three constituencies we won, there was definitely an Indian minority. We don't fight for Indians. Indeed in the opposition party there was an Indian who was a landlord who we opposed for many, many years. If you see that of the 35 members there, a minority only are Indians. For instance, there are only 16 out of 35. In the Senate and the Legislative Assembly combined, you will find 19 Indians only. So it is not true when Sidney King says Indians are dominating the political scene. This is not true.

MR. JENKINS: Your wife who in Chicago was accorded to be a member of a Communist front organization, had been until August 21 a member of your government.

DR. JAGAN: Oh well, we are putting in other people to try them out, to give them experience. After all, in colonial countries, backward countries, we need not only skilled technicians, but we need skilled politicians, and we want to have more people to put their hands behind the wheel.

MR. BROOKS: At this point we will have to suspend our questions. Thank you very much, Dr. Jagan, for being with us.

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